

キノの旅

— the Beautiful World —

「旅人の話」

— You —

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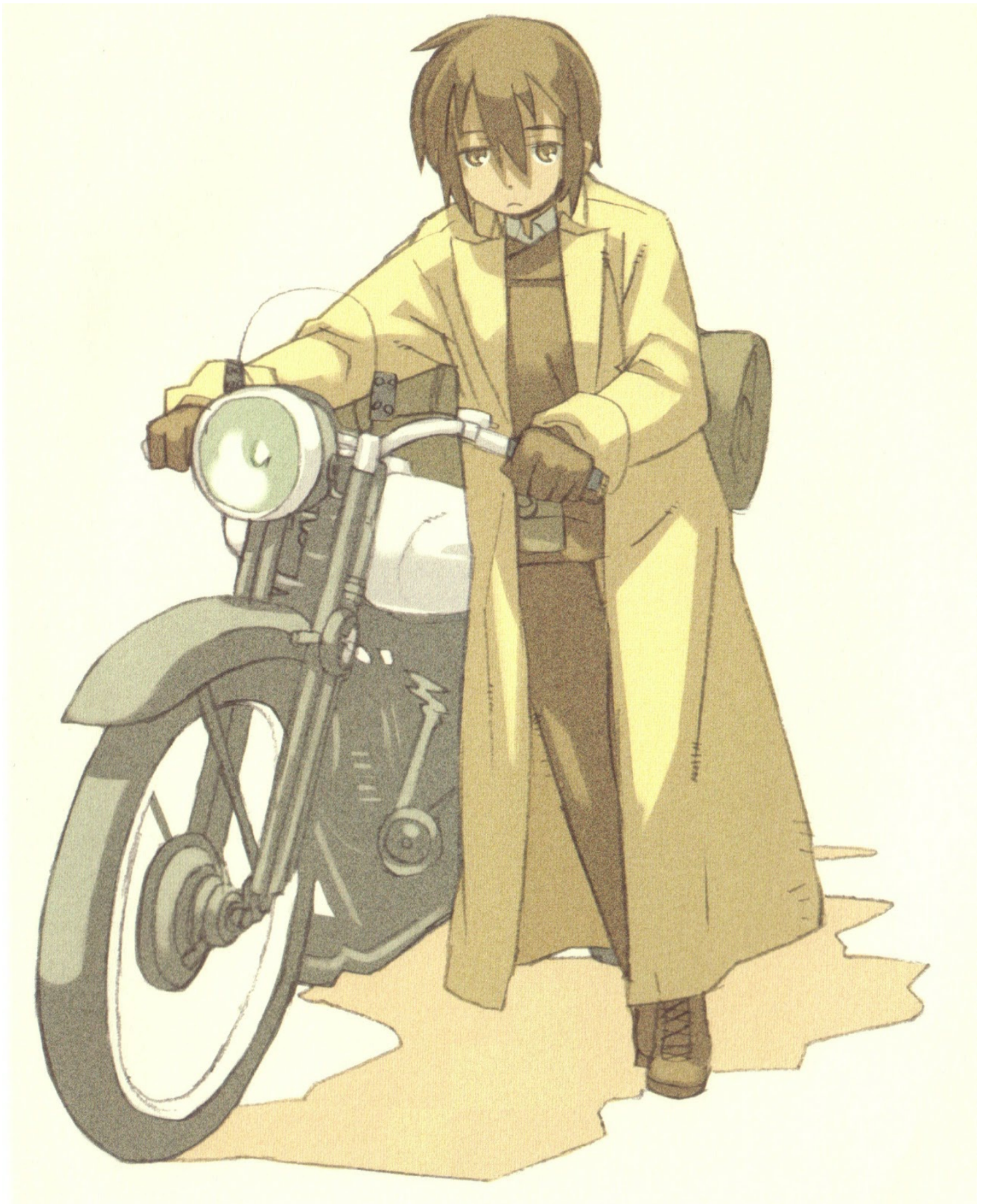


Kino no Tabi
-the Beautiful World-
Tale of a Traveler –You–
by Keiichi Sigsawa

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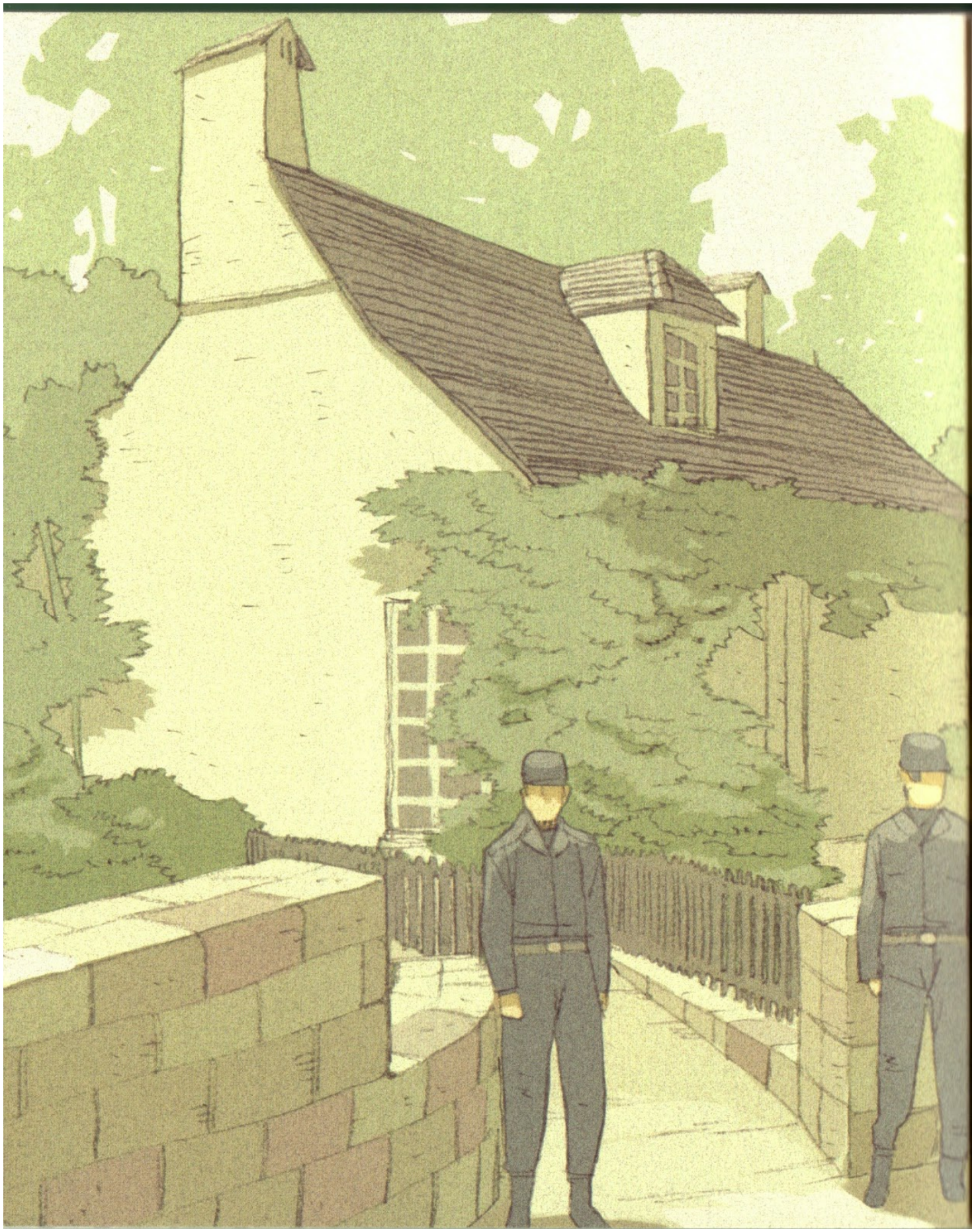


When I met the traveler who was called Kino, I was eleven years old and still living in the country where I was born.

Kino had short hair, wore a brown coat, carried multiple hand persuaders (Note: Firearms. In this case, handguns.) and came to this country riding a

motorrad (Note: Two-wheeled vehicle. Refers to only ones that cannot fly in the sky.) called Hermes—

“This is his memorial hall.”



In front of a house that stood in the middle of the forest, the young woman who acted as a guide spoke. The bespectacled woman in blue suit gave a wide smile while sweeping her hand toward the fence gate, which had two guards armed with rifles stationed in front.

“I see...” “Hm~m.”

The traveler in brown coat and the motorrad partner, who had been led here, answered simultaneously. They were Kino and Hermes. Kino’s coat was still on, while the luggage on Hermes had been kept at the inn.

“He’s so important that there’s a memorial dedicated to him, I see.”

As Kino blurted out, the guide raised her voice slightly.

“Absolutely! His greatness is too much for me to put into words! Although I personally think this small memorial hall is way too modest, he hated grandeur in life, so we chose to express his way of life by not building a large building, but by turning the house he retired to into this memorial hall.”

“He was a great man who saved this country, right?”

Hermes asked.

“Absolutely!”

“So he was a traveler like myself, who came to this country by chance...”

“That’s right! However, it was no chance! It was destiny!”

“Hmm...”

“Drawn to the beauty of this country, he had made the decision to take up residence. Then, he used the abundance of knowledge and experience to help the people. Before long, he overthrew the old corrupt government system and became the first president, leading this country down the right path!”

“I see!”

“And that is why! Kino and Hermes, you two have come all the way here, but it would be like you haven’t seen anything in this country at all if you don’t visit his memorial hall!”

The young woman said with passion.

“I understand. Then we’ll gladly take a tour of this memorial hall.”

“Agree, agree. I wonder what kind of things are memorialized here?”

Hearing Kino and Hermes’s statements, the young woman was able to calm down a little, before bowing to greet the guards in front of the gate.

“In that case, let us go inside... This way, please.”

They walked through a simple garden of planted flowers. Kino pushed Hermes up a slope that came down from the house’s entrance.

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The house was an ordinary one-story home, with a gable roof and chimney, walls made from stacks of large logs, and small windows.

Going through the door, there was a living room with carpeted floor, a cinder block fireplace, and a kitchen. The veranda lead further into the building. The soft sunlight could be seen shining in from a window on the roof.

In the living room, the owner’s belongings from when he was alive have been put on display on the cabinets, table, and fireplace. There were signs with short explanations for each of them, including kitchen wares, writing instrument cases, or the coats hanged in the closet.

“What do you think? It’s as if he’s still living here, isn’t it! Please, take your time to look around!”

The young woman said with pride.

Kino and Hermes took a look around the house as recommended.

“Not that different from a normal house, huh.”

“Shh—“

Kino signaled Hermes to stop talking.

But it was as the motorrad said.

”.....“

Before long, Kino started to get bored.

“Is there anything displayed in there as well?”

As Kino asked, the guide gave her answer in a surprised expression.

“Yes! ...In there are the items he used when he was a traveler.”

That might be more interesting, Hermes whispered. And so Kino pushed Hermes along the veranda before turning into the room to the right.

The unfurnished room was quite spacious. There were glass cabinets lined along the walls, displaying various items. The guide started to give explanations of each item one by one.

“For the first piece, this is the gardening trowel he used to use.”

In the glass cabinet was a small, dirty trowel.

“He used to always have it hanging from the side of his bag. Why do you think

that is?”

“Well, that’s...”

As Kino sounded reluctant, the guide continued on cheerfully.

“You see! That is because he was a man who really loved flowers! During his travels, he must have used this trowel to plant seeds and raise beautiful flowers! There’s no mistaking it!”

The guide spoke with confidence. While they were on their way to the next cabinet, Hermes whispered to Kino,

“That’s for going to the bathroom, right...? To dig holes for taking a dump.”

Kino replied in an equally quiet voice.

“You don’t need to say it.”

“The next piece! Take a look at this knife! Isn’t the engravement on its handle beautiful? He had been using it even before settling down here, it can’t be found anywhere else! When someone asked him ‘*Was it a gift from someone?*’ he would only dodge the question with a laugh. It must have been a present from someone special...”

There was another whisper.

“Kino, that knife...”

“Yeah.”

“It’s the ‘Lucky Knife’ that was being sold as a souvenir in some other country, right? The one that was advertised to ‘take effect immediately after purchase’?”

“Yeah.”

“Someone actually used this scam?”

“Yeah... But it did work, right?”

Kino and Hermes spoke between themselves quietly.

“Hm? ...What was the matter?”

The guide turned back in surprise, and Kino dodged her question, saying it’s nothing.

Other than those, the items on display were things like tents, bags, or canteens that he used to use. They weren’t considered anything special for travelers.

“This is the helmet that he used to use.”

“Helmet?”

Hermes repeated the word. In the cabinet that the motorrad’s partner walked up to, there was a full face helmet, looking quite old and dirty.

“This was for riding vehicles, right?”

Kino asked, and the guide nodded. Hermes then went on,

“Then...”

“That’s right. We have the motorrad he rode stored in the back room!”

The guide spoke with a cheerful voice.

” “

Hermes fell silent.

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Walking past the bedroom, which had been preserved as it was, they reached the back room. A motorrad was parked inside.

It was an off-road motorrad. Its front and rear suspensions were long, its tires thin, and its seat quite high. Its large headlight was fitted with a metal frame to guard against impact, and on its rear was a metallic carrier.

The center of the room was surrounded by a rope to prevent guests from getting too close, and inside the perimeter was the traveler's motorrad, placed on a stand. Both of its tires were hovering above ground.

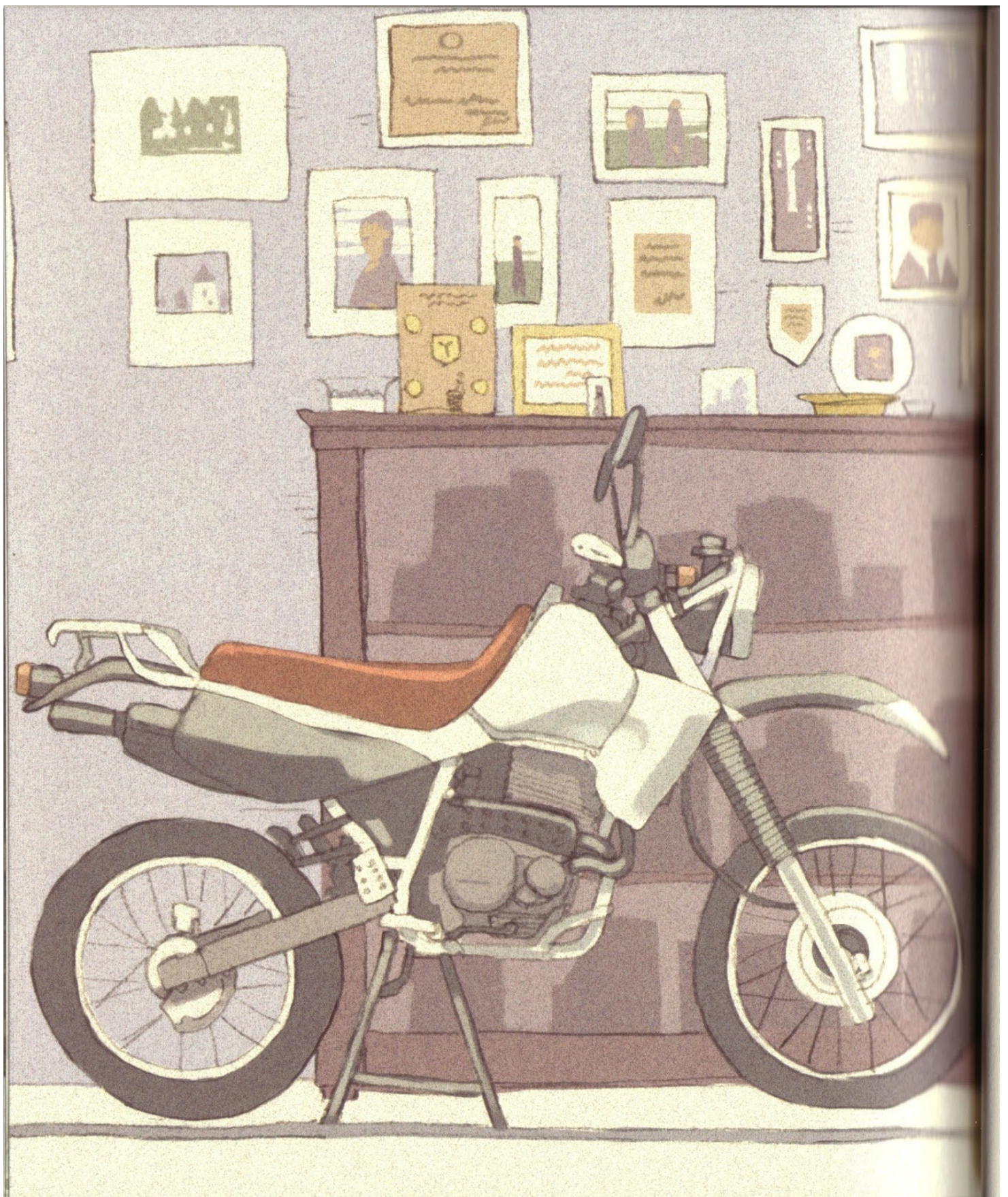
On the back of the room was a display of various items, such as bags, tools, and spare parts.

Two people and one vehicle entered the room.

"....."

"What do you think? He used to travel with this motorrad, just like you, Kino!"

"I see... To tell you the truth, this is the first time I've seen another motorrad..."



“.....”

The guide explained that the traveler came to this country on the motorrad, and never used any other vehicle even when living here. If he was going to go anywhere, it would be on this motorrad. When he passed away, everyone didn't want such an important motorrad to be sold off or ridden by someone

else, and so the council decided unanimously to preserve it here.

”.....”

“I see.”

“We have restorations of this memorial hall every half a year. During those times, our best mechanics would perform maintenance on it, keeping it in a condition to start the engine at any time and have performance like it’s new. That is so that this motorrad will remain as a testament to his greatness, right here, forever!”

As the guide finished, Kino asked a question,

“By the way, does this motorrad speak? Like Hermes.”

The guide nodded.

“Yes. It used to talk with him frequently, but it must have been saddened by his passing and never spoke to anyone again. This is the first time another motorrad has come all the way here, so I thought maybe you’d be able to help...”

”.....”

“I see.”

For a while, Kino looked the motorrad in silence.

”...Wait.”

Hermes spoke up after a long silence.

“Guide lady, would you mind stepping outside for a bit? By chance, it might say

something.”

“My, that would be nice indeed... If it says anything, please do tell me.”

Hermes affirmed the request, and the guide said she'll be waiting in the living room before leaving.



Only Kino and two motorrads remained in the room.

“.....”

A moment passed with no one saying anything.

Kino thought of asking, *Maybe I don't understand the motorrad language?*

“How nice...”

A voice sounded quietly. The voice sounded either like that of a woman, or like that of a thin man.

“Isn’t it nice?”

Hermes gave a brief reply. Softly, the quiet voice continues.

“How nice... You... Do you get to run every day...?”

“Isn’t it nice? Kino drives me almost every day.”

Hermes answered as if having suppressed emotions, with voice softer than usual.

“This place... It’s hell.”

“I bet it is.”

The two vehicles spoke to each other.

”“

And Kino listened in silence.

“This place... is hell. Motorrads were born to be ridden... But to have to stay in this place... To exist without breaking... Just to be put on some display...”

“It really is hell.”

”“

The motorrad on display spoke to Kino.

“Hey, human... Please get me out of here... Ride me... Have me run...”

“I can’t do that.”

Kino replied.

“I understand how you feel. But if Kino is going to drive you, wouldn’t I end up in that state in your stead?”

Hermes spoke in a tone that is starting to return to normal.

“Then...”

The motorrad on display made a proposal.

“Please smash me to pieces with your own hands.”

“...I can’t do that either. If I did, the people of this country would detest me and smash me to pieces as well.”

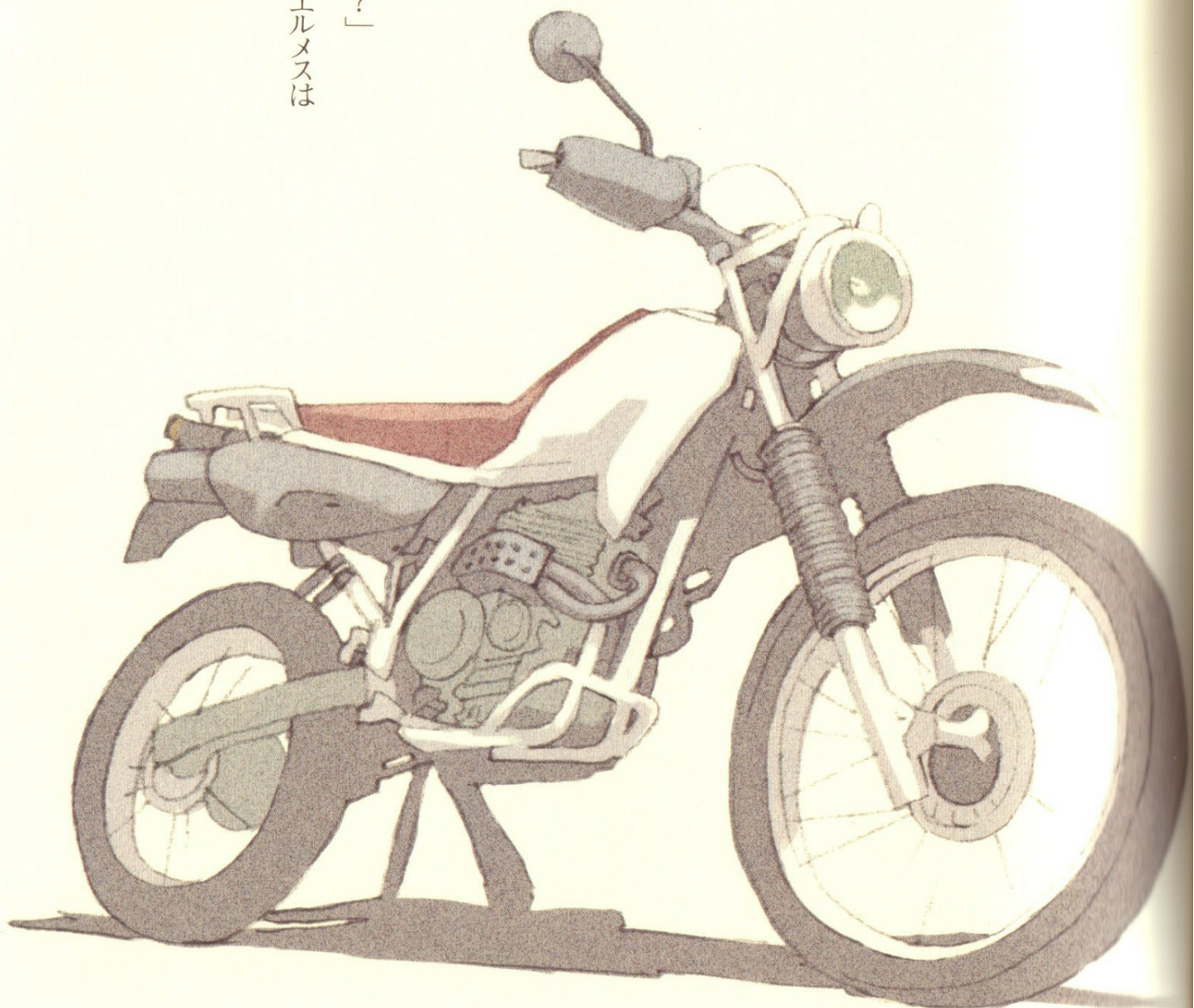
“I see... I see... I see... I see...”

The motorrad, that had to keep on being displayed, mumbled before falling silent.

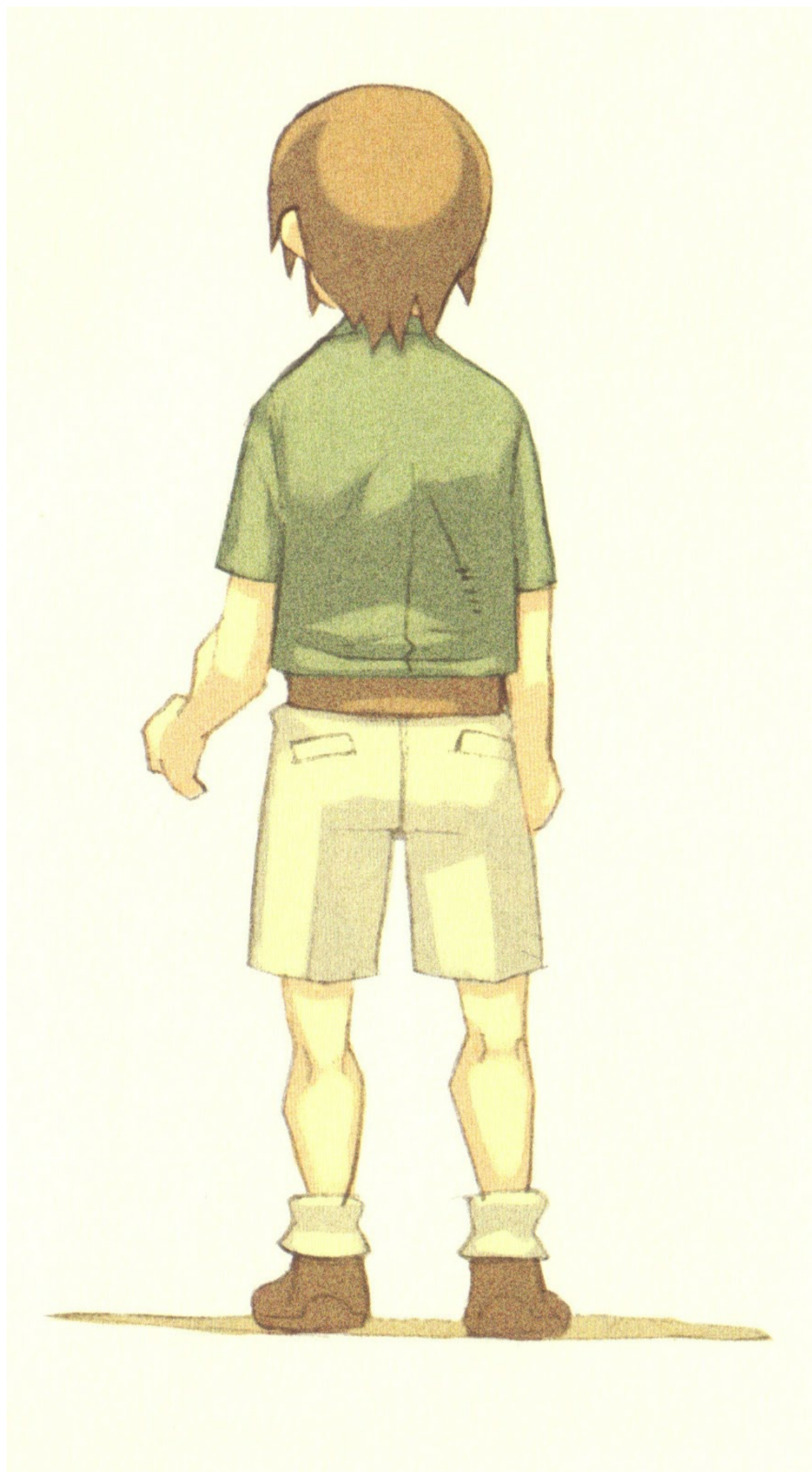
“Did it say anything?”

Kino and Hermes decided to lie to the guide.

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I met Kino right after she had just entered the country.

She was looking for a cheap inn that has a shower included, so I brought her to the inn owned by my parents.

While I was helping with work at the inn, on the night before Kino left the country, I asked her why she continues to travel, why did she start traveling, and how can I become a traveler...

“The reason was quite a violent one, but thinking back... It’s because I wanted to do it, even without anyone ordering me to, I guess... As for how, there’s no one way to become one.”

That was the answer she gave me.

That night, I tried asking my parents about how I can become a traveler. I’ve seen them praise the travelers who came to stay at the inn, so they might know some nice ways.

The two of them answered,

“If you have enough time to have a foolish dream, you’d be better off helping with work at the inn... There’s no way you’ll become a traveler.”

The next day, with a gloomy face, I went to see Kino off.

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As Hermes’s engine roared and sent out a thin exhaust smoke, Kino was making some last checks before setting off. She looked so cool. She checked her persuader bullets, wore her coat, and put on her hat and goggles. She was dazzling. I could only watch. I thought I wanted to be like that someday. But at the same time, I thought that I might not be able to in this life.

“Please be careful out there, and may your travels be safe!”

As I said that, Kino smiled and nodded.

Not able to hold myself back, I asked Kino the same ‘foolish’ question that I had asked my parents the night before. How can I become a traveler?

Kino looked at me with eyes under those goggles, then answered,

“I don’t know.”

As I fell to the depth of hopelessness, Kino went on,

“The first president’s motorrad is in the memorial hall, right? You’d do well to ask that same question to the motorrad. By chance, it’ll give you an answer.”

I replied in surprise.

“It can talk? ...But everyone said it stopped talking a long time ago.”

“Why not give it a try? It’s not like you have any other methods right now.”

“That’s true... I got it.”

I sent Kino off.

Kino was so cool even when she’s leaving.

At least up to now, that was the last time I ever saw Kino.

キノさんを見た最後だ。



That day, Kino told me that there's no one way to become a traveler, and that her reasons for becoming one was quite violent.

I put what little hope I had in Kino's words and made some time to go to the memorial hall.

In meeting the motorrad that used to belong to the first president, I had hoped that the motorrad would give me an answer.

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There is no one way.

There are many paths.

In this world, there is no single 'right' way to be a traveler.

There is never 'no way' for one to press onwards.

I learned that from the first president's motorrad.

It may be though, but it's not impossible.

Luckily, I had plenty of time, and was able to choose the best method. I worked hard to make my dreams come true.

I did various things to develop essential knowledge and skills. Some 'studying,' some 'playing,' some 'sports,' some 'training'.

I slowly grew up. I graduated from school, and just as I planned, I got to be in the police force, where I learned how to use persuaders and the art of self defense.

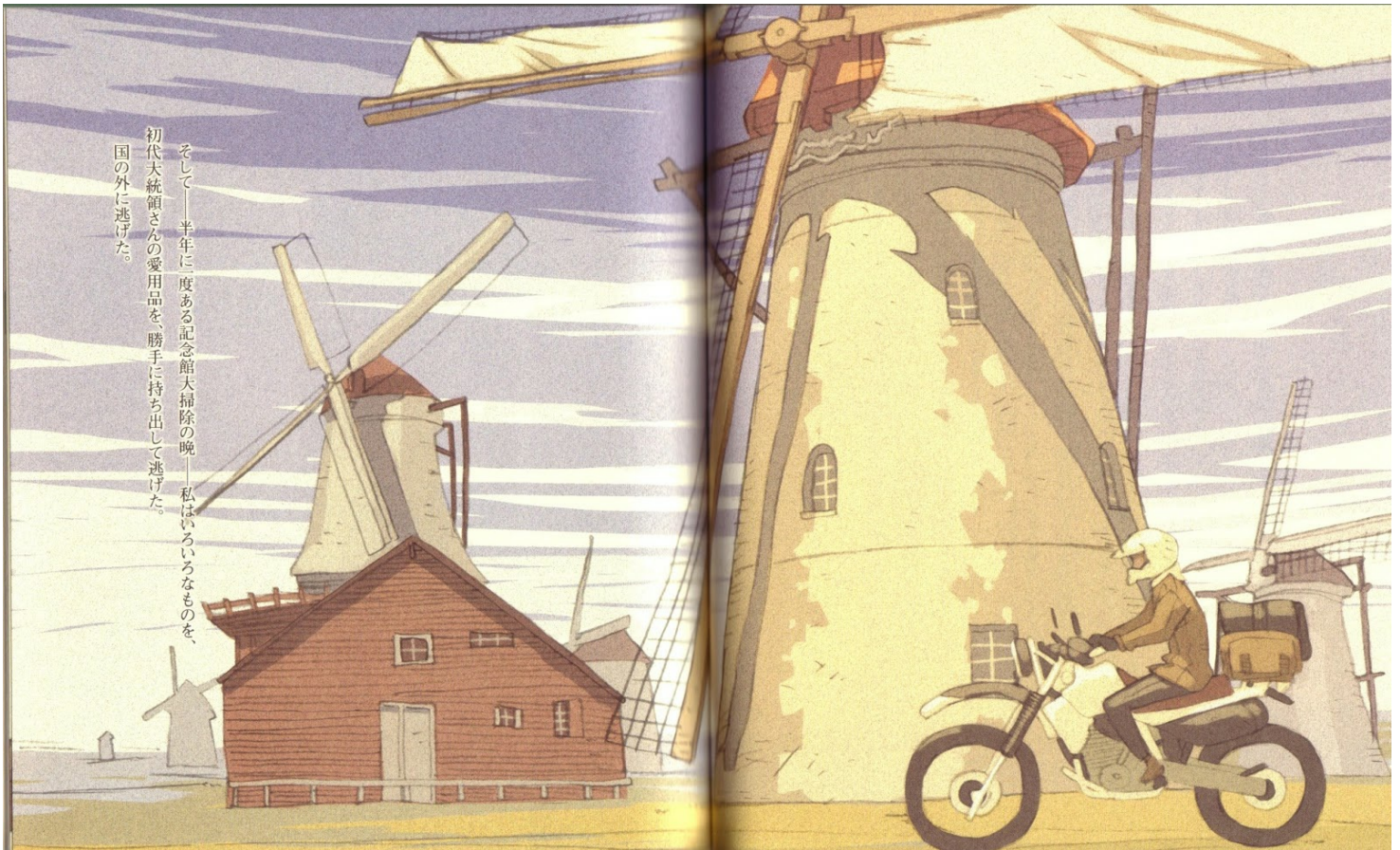
And all the while... I have been submitting a certain request.

Before long... the request was approved. I was stationed as a guard of the memorial hall.

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And so... In the night of the half-yearly restoration, I took a bunch of stuff– the first president's belongings– and escaped.

Escaped from the country.



When I reached a new country, asking for a cheap inn with shower included became a habit of mine. Just like Kino from back then.

In this country, the kid who guided me was the child of the owner and was helping at workd at the inn. He asked me questions about my travels... just like I did back then. He asked where I came from, how I travel, what are the things essential for traveling.

When he asked why I continue to travel, I answered,

“It’s because I want to do it, even without anyone ordering me to.”

And then he asked me how he could become a traveler.

I answered.

I was able to give an answer.